

TOP SECRET RUFF UMBRA

SYRIA-PLO: Coalition of Pro-Syrian Palestinian Factions. (U)

(S/WN/NF) Israeli military intelligence analysts believe the formation of the Palestinian National Salvation Front (PNSF) represents a partial success for Syria against PLO chief Yasir Arafat but intense internal rivalries will handicap the group.

(S/WN/NF) According to an Israeli Directorate of Military Intelligence (DMI) assessment, formation of the PNSF is a partial success by Syria to create a broad front of Palestinian militias opposed to PLO chairman Yasir Arafat. The Israelis think internal disputes and the perception the PNSF is nothing more than a Syrian puppet organization will continue to handicap the coalition [redacted]

Despite Libya's significant role in organizing the front, DMI believes Syria retains "absolute control" of the group. The DMI also noted that the inclusion of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) in the front was another considerable accomplishment, since the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine is now the only militia not associated with the PLO or PNSF.

COMMENT: (S/WN/NF) The Israeli assessment is generally accurate, but the view that the PNSF is under absolute control of Syria is misleading. Although Damascus dominates Saiga and the Palestinian Struggle Front, the remaining groups are influenced by, but are not under, Syria's complete control. Inclusion of PFLP, which has pursued an independent radical line under George Habash's leadership, indicates the groups in PNSF are not as susceptible to Syrian pressure as the Israelis believe.

(S/WN/NF) The DMI also underplays Libya's role in forming the coalition. The Libyans would like to see the PNSF supplant the PLO and actively subvert Arafat's recent peace moves. The Syrians, however, have made clear that the organization is intended to counterbalance Arafat's leadership but not replace the PLO. (DECL OADR)

Prepared by: [redacted]

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Defense Intelligence Summary

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DIA review completed.

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